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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 9193  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2108  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9133  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000331

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DEPT FOR SA/INS  
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [NP](#)  
SUBJECT: MORE VIOLENCE AND PROTESTS ON "BLACK DAY"

REF: A. KATHMANDU 321

[1](#)B. 05 KATHMANDU 2556

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty, reasons 1.4 (b/d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (U) The one year anniversary of the royal takeover, termed "Black Day" by parties and journalists, saw continued Maoist violence and government arrests of politicians and journalists throughout the country. Political party leaders claimed that the King's address to the nation contained "nothing new" and stated the Parties did not plan to observe a Maoist-called nationwide strike from February 5 to 11. End Summary.

MAOIST VIOLENCE UNCEASING; MORE CANDIDATES TARGETED

[1](#)2. (U) The anniversary of the royal takeover, February 1, saw continued Maoist violence around the country. A junior Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) officer was shot and killed at his home in Lalitpur (inside Kathmandu's ring road) in the evening. Maoists continued to target municipal election candidates, bombing the homes of four different mayoral candidates, in Tikapur (western Nepal), Parsa (south-central Nepal), Kapilbastu (western Nepal), and Nuwakot (central Nepal). Five bombs went off simultaneously in the town of Dhangadhi (western Nepal) in an area where the District Police Office, jail, and branch office of the Nepal Rastra Bank were located. In Pokhara (mid-western tourist destination), bombs exploded at a sub-metropolis office and the Regional Forest Training Center, but there were no reports of injuries.

UPDATE ON MAJOR MAOIST ATTACK IN TANSEN

[1](#)3. (C) More details became available on the January 31 attack on the town of Tansen in Palpa District (south-west Nepal) (ref A). An Embassy source reported that over 4,000 Maoist rebels were involved in the attack. News reports claim 11 security force and eight Maoist casualties, while a Maoist statement claimed that 45 security force personnel were killed and 25 abducted. The statement confirmed that Maoists held the Chief District Officer and two other missing local government officials, and claimed Maoists seized hundreds of

weapons from the District Police Office's warehouse. (Note: A military source told us, "43 pieces of .303 rifles, two short guns, two hornet rifles, one magnum, seven Chinese pistols, two revolvers, five pieces of 5.4 caliber pistols, and 9 SLR went to Maoist hands." Also, that six RNA soldiers were missing. End Note.) In a separate Maoist statement, Maoist President Prachanda encouraged the Nepal Police and RNA to join the side of "pro-democracy" Nepalis. Maoists attacked Palpa prison and freed 129 prisoners, although 14 of them reportedly contacted security forces later. The historic Palpa Palace that housed the District Administrative Offices burned all day and was in ruins.

#### MORE ARRESTS ON "BLACK DAY"

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¶4. (U) All over Nepal, pro-democracy forces, human rights defenders and journalists took to the streets to observe the one year anniversary of the royal takeover (February 1), deemed "Black Day." Reports indicated that over 500 demonstrators were arrested nationwide. In Kathmandu, security forces disrupted demonstrators' plans to march on central Kathmandu's Durbar Square and arrested 58 protesters; 30 of these were journalists who were later released. Monitors from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported that police forces used batons and water cannons to disperse demonstrators; overall, they concluded the police response was "measured." Significant numbers of arrests throughout the rest of the country included: 60 in Janakpur (central Nepal), 58 in Jhapa (eastern Nepal), 50 in Surkhet (mid-west Nepal), 44 in Gulariya (mid-west Nepal), 35 in Bidur (central Nepal), 18 in Pokhara (mid-west Nepal), and 13 in Biratnagar (eastern Nepal). In Jhapa, 23 of the 58 arrested were journalists. POLITICOS: KING'S ADDRESS MORE OF THE SAME

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¶5. (C) Political leaders commented that the King's February 1 address (ref A) mentioned nothing new. K.P. Oli, Central Committee Member of the Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) commented that the speech affirmed the continuity of the King's "so-called roadmap to democracy" and intent to hold municipal elections. Krishna Prasad Sitaula, Spokesperson, Nepali Congress Party (NC), explained that the speech indicated the King intended to carry on his autocratic rule. He added that the King had yet to show flexibility in dealing with the Parties.

#### NO PARTY SUPPORT OF MAOISTS' ALL-NEPAL STRIKE

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¶6. (C) The Parties have said they would not observe the February 5 to 11 Maoist-called all-Nepal bandh (general strike). Oli stated that his party would not support the bandh and urged the Maoists to withdraw it as the strike "would only cause suffering to the general population." He added there could be road blockades on highways that could have an impact on life in Kathmandu. Sitaula said the Parties were "for peace" and so the NC would not support the bandh. He further explained that the NC would continue with peaceful protests in all 58 municipalities even during the bandh.

#### COMMENT

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¶7. (C) Events in Nepal continue to move towards greater confrontation: the King has signaled he will hold municipal elections, the Parties plan to move forward with protests, and the Maoists are stepping up their campaign of violence. Comments that the Parties will not support the Maoists' all-Nepal bandh are, however, intriguing. In the face of increasing Maoist violence, the Parties will have to decide whether to renounce the Party-Maoist 12-point understanding (ref B). MORIARTY